

To: FCC Localism Task Force
Re: Monterey, CA Localism Hearing Webcast

I am e-mailing this notice to express my deep disappointment and dismay with not being able to view and/or hear the FCC Localism Public Hearing's webcast from July 21, 2004. First off, the Audio/Video Events page stated to reload the page at 9 p.m. EDT (or 6 p.m. PDT) to activate the webcast. At approximately 6:12 p.m. PDT, the link was finally activated, as I sat at my workstation and refreshed the page around every 30 seconds from about 5:50 p.m., to ensure that I secured one of the 200 spots that your media server claims to support at any one time. Please keep in mind that I had been looking forward to this webcast for several weeks, and furthermore have faithfully witnessed all the previous localism hearings, live via the Internet over the past year, without incident. However, on this occasion, instead of Realplayer automatically launching when the link was utilized, as has been the case for the other hearings, I was completely ambushed and amazed as I discovered I was being forwarded to a third-party website (ampmedia.org) that was utilizing Windows Media Player for the webcast. I don't have an issue with the FCC depending on a non-profit or even a for profit entity being responsible for the delivery of content, providing access is free and available to all which are earnestly seeking to receive the online presentation. My complaint arises from the fact that it was NOT available to all those wanting to be informed, which includes myself. Allow me to explain further. Overlooking the fact that a change in application software (from Realplayer to Windows Media Player) was not given any advanced notice on your website nor was announced until after the forwarding link was activated, plus understanding that AMP attempted to compensate for this change on their website by adding instructional information and a Microsoft Media Player upgrade link under the various delivery links for the webcast, could not counter one important missing caveat. Media Player 9, which AMP specifically required endusers to possess or download at no charge to access the content, cannot be installed on computer systems operating with first edition Windows 98 or earlier. Microsoft makes this abundantly clear on their website. Furthermore, those that needed the download at the last minute could still be handicapped, even if the application software would be compatible with their operating systems. These particular individuals were likely utilizing a 56k dial-up configuration, such as myself, that usually surf the Net at speeds inferior to the rated modem bandwidth. For instance, my Internet Provider of six years, Earthlink, normally connects me at between 36-38Kbps, with 42Kbps being the absolute best (very rare) I've ever achieved in half a dozen years of service. I make this distinction because many home endusers of moderate means rely on dial-up in order to access the Internet. With such low transfer bitrates from a modem, the Media Player 9 download will easily take more than an hour to complete, provided there were no errors, timeouts, or disruptions to occur during this lengthy electronic transfer, in which case you would have to start over from scratch. Meanwhile, the desired Public Hearing would be a quarter to a third over, and the disadvantaged enduser has missed a significant portion of this proceeding, provided they were fortunate enough to not be using Windows 95 or 98. I would sincerely pray that the Localism Task Force will correct these

oversights from the live webcast, so that when the event is archived, interested parties with inferior computer and/or Internet resources will finally be able to still access the Public Hearing that they were excluded from the first time around.

Truly yours,
Richard Hodson d/b/a
HODSON BROADCASTING